

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for operating a cardiac pacing device, comprising:
sensing a parameter related to cardiac output;
outputting pacing pulses to a selected subset of a plurality of pacing electrodes in accordance with a programmed pacing mode, wherein the subset of electrodes to which pulses are output is defined by a pulse output configuration; and,
switching the pulse output configuration utilized for one or more cardiac cycles to another pulse output configuration for one or more subsequent cardiac cycles in accordance with a switching algorithm dependent upon the sensed parameter related to cardiac output that comprises switching the pulse output configuration at specified time intervals.
2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising sensing ~~intra-thoracic impedance to derive the~~ a parameter related to cardiac output and wherein the switching algorithm further comprises switching the pulse output configuration in a manner dependent upon the sensed parameter related to cardiac output.
3. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising outputting non-excitatory stimulation pulses to selected electrodes in conjunction with pacing pulses.
- 4-6. (Canceled)
7. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein a pulse output configuration is further defined as a temporal sequence of pulses output to the fixed electrodes during a cardiac cycle.
8. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein the stimulation pulses are output to a bipolar electrode having tip and ring electrodes disposed near a heart chamber, and further comprising switching the pulse output configuration by alternating the polarity of the delivered pulses.

9. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising switching the pulse output configuration in accordance with the mean or minimum heart rate measured over a time interval.

10. (Original) The method of claim 1 further comprising switching the pulse output configuration in accordance with a sensed time delay of a depolarization occurring in an area of the myocardium after delivery of a pacing pulse.

11. (Currently Amended) A cardiac pacemaker, comprising:
a plurality of electrodes adapted for disposition near a heart chamber;
a plurality of defined pulse output configurations, wherein each pulse output configuration constitutes a subset of the plurality of the electrodes;
~~a sensor for sensing a parameter related to cardiac output;~~
a control unit and pulse generating circuitry for outputting pacing pulses to a selected one of the plurality of pulse output configurations in accordance with a programmed mode;
wherein the control unit is programmed to utilize a first pulse output configuration during one or more cardiac cycles and switch to a second pulse output configuration during one or more subsequent cardiac cycles in accordance with a switching algorithm ~~dependent upon the sensed parameter related to cardiac output~~ that comprises switching the pulse output configuration at specified time intervals.

12. (Currently Amended) The pacemaker of claim 11 further comprising ~~intra-thoracic impedance sensor for sensing the~~ a sensor for sensing a parameter related to cardiac output and wherein the switching algorithm further comprises switching the pulse output configuration in a manner dependent upon the sensed parameter related to cardiac output.

13. (Original) The pacemaker of claim 11 further comprising circuitry for outputting non-excitatory stimulation pulses to selected electrodes in conjunction with pacing pulses.

14-16. (Canceled)

17. (Original) The pacemaker of claim 11 wherein a pulse output configuration is further defined as a temporal sequence of pulses output to the fixed electrodes during a cardiac cycle.

18. (Original) The pacemaker of claim 11 further comprising a bipolar electrode having tip and ring electrodes for disposition near a heart chamber, and wherein the pulse output configuration is switched by alternating the polarity of the delivered pulses.

19. (Original) The pacemaker of claim 11 wherein the switching algorithm further comprises switching the pulse output configuration in accordance with the mean or minimum heart rate measured over a time interval.

20. (Original) The pacemaker of claim 11 wherein the switching algorithm further comprises switching the pulse output configuration in accordance with a sensed time delay of a depolarization occurring in an area of the myocardium after delivery of a pacing pulse.

21. (New) A method for operating a cardiac pacing device, comprising:
outputting pacing pulses to a selected subset of a plurality of pacing electrodes in accordance with a programmed pacing mode, wherein the subset of electrodes to which pulses are output is defined by a pulse output configuration; and,
switching the pulse output configuration utilized for one or more cardiac cycles to another pulse output configuration for one or more subsequent cardiac cycles in accordance with a switching algorithm that comprises switching the pulse output configuration after a specified number of heart beats.

22. (New) The method of claim 21 further comprising sensing a parameter related to cardiac output and wherein the switching algorithm further comprises switching the pulse output configuration in a manner dependent upon the sensed parameter related to cardiac output.

23. (New) A cardiac pacemaker, comprising:

 a plurality of electrodes adapted for disposition near a heart chamber;

 a plurality of defined pulse output configurations, wherein each pulse output configuration constitutes a subset of the plurality of the electrodes;

 a control unit and pulse generating circuitry for outputting pacing pulses to a selected one of the plurality of pulse output configurations in accordance with a programmed mode;

 wherein the control unit is programmed to utilize a first pulse output configuration during one or more cardiac cycles and switch to a second pulse output configuration during one or more subsequent cardiac cycles in accordance with a switching algorithm that comprises switching the pulse output configuration after a specified number of heart beats.

24. (New) The pacemaker of claim 23 further comprising a sensor for sensing a parameter related to cardiac output and wherein the switching algorithm further comprises switching the pulse output configuration in a manner dependent upon the sensed parameter related to cardiac output.